



# 8 Tips To Keep The Holidays Joyful When Going Through Divorce

MH | MELONE HATLEY, P.C.

*Going through a divorce can be an emotional rollercoaster. Unfortunately, the holidays can work as an amplifier, and multiply those negative emotions, especially when you have to deal with your ex-spouse or soon-to-be ex-spouse. We have put together a list of steps and tips you can use as a guide to keeping your holiday season as cordial as possible!*

## 1 Keep The Holidays About The Children

This first tip is the most obvious, but unfortunately the most overlooked. Although it can be tough to accept, your divorce will probably have a significant negative impact on your children, especially around the holidays. Listen to what they are saying and try to focus on their feelings. If you can maintain a civil or friendly relationship with your ex-spouse, you may want to consider spending some time together as co-parents with the children. Also, try starting new traditions that can be repeated and appreciated for years to come.



## 2 Make Gift Arrangements

During this time of year, you don't want to create any unnecessary stress or conflict. In order to accomplish this, we suggest that you talk about what gifts each parent will get the children. This way you can minimize duplicate gifts and the headache that comes along with them. It is also a good idea to keep in mind that giving gifts isn't a competition so don't try to "one up" the other parent's gift.



## 3 Focus on Communicating and Scheduling Effectively

Early communication regarding the holiday plan with your co-parent will help things run smoothly. Dates and times should be specific to avoid confusion later. Have both parties email the agreement to one another to avoid misunderstandings. Other topics that should be discussed are:

- Any changes to the visitation schedule
- What clothes to pack if children are traveling for holidays
- Putting together a "gift budget"
- Communicating the plan with the children





## 4 Stay As Flexible As Possible

Even with communicating and setting a schedule with your ex-spouse, remember that the holidays can be a hectic time and sometimes plans will change. It doesn't help the situation if one or both of you get frustrated with each other because of this. Focus on your willingness to compromise and remain slightly flexible in order to keep the holidays stress-free, not only for yourself but for your children as well.

## 5 Be Kind To Yourself

Make sure you are in a healthy state of mind. Go to the gym or workout at home, make sure you are eating healthier foods and drinking lots of water. You may want to try meditation to relax, or do whatever helps you relieve stress and to keep your spirits high. Whatever it is that you do to keep yourself grounded, do more of it. Your children's mood often feeds off of your mood, so it is important to remain aware of your mental and physical health.

## 6 Use the Stop, Look, and Listen Technique

This technique has been used in parenting, business, and even transportation. The same technique can be used in maintaining a civil relationship with your ex-spouse during the holidays. If something gets you upset, you should first Stop yourself from reacting negatively, normally done by taking deep breaths. Then, you Look at your options before you respond and be sure to choose the best option that avoids conflict. Finally, you should Listen to your better judgment, and respond in a way that avoids unnecessary conflict.





## 7

# Be Patient With Yourself

---

Often times parents can put pressure and stress on themselves trying to make the holidays perfect for their children. Sometimes that stress you feel can be felt by your children. It is ok to slow things down and pace yourself. A good strategized plan beforehand with your co-parent can help alleviate some of that stress. Remember, it is also ok to create new traditions with your children if the old ones are too stressful for you to maintain.



## 8

# Avoid Negative Talks About Ex-Spouse

---

## With Family

It is completely normal for strong emotions regarding your ex to appear during the holidays. However, if your ex-spouse is expected to participate in your holiday festivities for the sake of the children as part of your arrangement, they may spend some of that time with your family. Making fun of your ex in the days leading up to these events will just add to the tension.



*If you, or someone you know, is going through a divorce this holiday season, send them this guide. If you need help going through these items, contact the attorneys at Melone Hatley, P.C. - We're here to help!*

